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INTERVIEW ON GERMAN TELEVISION
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GERMAN TELEVISION

Q. Isn't it more reasonable to bring the former Soviet Union countries into the NATO? If they join us, there is no more necessity to beat them?

A. The President, as you know, proposed to NATO, and NATO accepted last month's Partnership for Peace. Partnership for Peace is a step on the way to NATO membership. The NATO members believe, and I firmly agree, that membership in NATO is not an honorary benefit; it requires certain standards, certain ability to participate. The standards

include having a democratic, functioning society. It involves civilian control of the military. For a country to be a fully participating member of NATO, they have to be prepared to contribute and provide to NATO so that all of those countries can share in those benefits. We see that evolving. We see that coming, and we see Partnership for Peace as an important step. It's not just symbolism, being Partnership for Peace. It will involve these other countries in training with NATO members, conducting joint exercises with NATO members, and doing standardization of equipment, and practicing under common command and control. It's a very important first step in that direction.

Q. NATO is a peacekeeping organization. Why don't we use NATO to bring peace and to keep peace to Bosnia?

A. We are proposed to use NATO in a very important way in peace in Bosnia. There are two different ways we can do that though. One way is to take NATO as a military force and impose a peace, force a peace on the participants. That would involve, presumably, injecting troops militarily, and fighting a way into what would eventually become peaceful conditions. We have rejected the alternative of imposing peace militarily. The other alternative we are pursuing, which is encouraging, assisting the three combatants to arrive at a peace agreement. If they arrive at that peace agreement, then NATO has offered to put in very substantial peacekeeping forces. This could involve, 30, 40, 50,000 troops on the ground in Bosnia to assist in maintaining that peace. That is a very strong commitment. That's not even considering the role in humanitarian efforts. We have airlift and air dropped -- three or four of the NATO nations have been involved in a humanitarian airlift operation comparable to the Berlin Blockade airlift. This is a huge, very important operation. We've saved tens of thousands of lives, and that's not to mention the UNPROFOR effort on the ground which is not a NATO effort, which is a UN effort, which is also tended to reduce the level of violence which might otherwise be incurred.

Q. Do you think that the humanitarian, that this is enough if you see that in Sarajevo there is daily bloodshed?

A. No, I don't believe that the humanitarian is enough. I believe we must reach a peace agreement in that country, but as I said, NATO is prepared in the maintenance of that peace agreement. We are not prepared to impose by military force a peace agreement in the country.

Q. Chancellor Kohl admonished Croatia not to escalate the war in Bosnia? What is your opinion concerning Croatia?

A. We are getting some reports now that they are escalating the military forces. I can't fully credit those reports at this time, but if it is correct, it is a very bad policy on their part. I welcome Chancellor Kohl's intervention in this regard because I believe he may have more influence on the Croats than most other countries.

Q. Germany reduces its Bundeswehr. How strong has the Bundeswehr to be to remain a reliable NATO partner.

A. Bundeswehr, without question, is a reliable NATO partner, one of the most reliable. Anytime we have been involved with Bundeswehr forces, whether it be in NATO operations or in the Somali operations, we have found them to be very effective, very well trained, very well disciplined troops. It is always a pleasure for the American forces to work in conjunction with Bundeswehr forces.

Q. The U.S. and NATO knew to manage more or less for 40 years the confrontations of the super powers, but they have problems with the regional conflicts. Why is it?

A. What we managed with the super power was by providing massive and very effective military forces to deter a war. We don't know how to deter these local, regional conflicts. We don't know how to deter civil wars. We get involved in peacekeeping operations to discourage them, but we don't know how to force our will on those people. That's the first half. The second half is the military operations. We're very reluctant to undertake military operations in the middle of the civil war. First of all, we may find ourselves fighting both sides. Secondly, we're not sure we'd really be welcomed by all of the people in such a war. Even if we were welcomed, conducting military operations, particularly in an urban area, is almost impossible to fight, to conduct military operations there without endangering the lives of thousand of civilians and innocent people. We try to stay away from military operations in civil wars and it's a very, very different kind of a prospect that takes very different military forces; it takes very different political and diplomatic processes to deal with those problems.

Q. There are no participants from the Eastern European countries and from Russia in this conference here in Munich. Do you miss them?

A. I do miss them. I'm very disappointed they're not here. I have met with many of the leaders in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Poland, the whole set of Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries. I would very much have liked to see them here. Nevertheless we will continue bilateral discussions with them and I hope at the next NATO Partnership for Peace meeting, we will see them there. That will become probably the most effective vehicle for bringing these different groups of people together for discussions on security matters of mutual interest.

Q. What is the reason that they are not here?

A. I don't know. I was expecting to see them here. I was surprised and disappointed. In fact, at one time, Mr. Grachev was scheduled to speak right after my speech tomorrow. I was looking forward to renewing my acquaintance with him.

Thank you very much .